

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings House
Vicinity of State Road 325
Cross Creek
Alachua County
Florida

HABS No. FL-165-1

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1-CROCK,
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS HOUSE

HABS No. FL-165

Location: Vicinity of State Road 325, Cross Creek, Alachua County, Florida

Present Owner: University Foundation, University of Florida.

Present Occupant: Curator.

Present Use: Museum.

Significance: The Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings house, typical of the late 19th century "cracker" farmhouse of Central Florida, was purchased in 1928 by Mrs. Rawlings, famous for THE YEARLING (Pulitzer Prize, 1939), SOUTH MOON UNDER, CROSS CREEK, and GOLDEN APPLES. Mrs. Rawlings repaired the house and added bathrooms and a carport to the existing building. She bequeathed the house to the University of Florida when she died in 1954.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Late 19th century. The building is known to have been in existence prior to the great freezes of the late 19th century.
2. Architect: Architect for each of three separate units not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The information below lists property ownership changes in chronological order.

Partition in suite of Arredondo sale to M. C. Taylor, W. H. Taylor, T. G. Taylor, and E. E. Taylor, November 6, 1849.

Deed from T. G. Taylor, et al heirs W. Taylor to T. B. Myers, dated December 29, 1881, filed February 20, 1883 and recorded in Deed Book O, page 107 of the Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.

Deed from T. B. Meyers to J. S. Clarke, dated February 9, 1884, filed April 4, 1884 and recorded in Deed Book S, page 284 of the Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.

Deed from J. S. Clarke to J. R. Shaw and B. K. Shaw, dated June 24, 1885, filed September 30, 1885 and recorded in Deed Book W, page 265, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.

Deed from J. R. Shaw and wife to Mrs. A. Bush, dated July 23, 1886, filed July 24, 1886 and recorded in Deed Book Z, page 46 of the Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.

Warranty Deed from W. G. Bush to Mrs. Sallie B. Herbert, dated January 12, 1906, filed July 18, 1907 and recorded in Deed Book 71, page 536 of the Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.

Warranty Deed dated August 4, 1916 from Sallie B. Herbert to J. E. Saunders, filed December 28, 1916 and recorded in Deed Book 99, page 464 of the Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.

Warranty Deed dated March 28, 1917 by J. E. Saunders and wife to Mary E. Myers, filed April 11, 1917 and recorded in Deed Book 102, page 114 of the Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.

Warranty Deed dated October 15, 1921 by Mary E. Myers and her husband to John Armstrong, filed June 24, 1922 and recorded in Deed Book 116, page 443 of the Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.

Warranty Deed dated July 17, 1928 by John Armstrong and wife, Helen E. Armstrong, to Marjorie K. Rawlings, filed August 20, 1928 and recorded in Deed Book 153, page 568 of the Public Records of Alachua County, Florida. The new owner paid \$7,400.00 in cash and took a \$2,000.00 mortgage.

Deed dated September 29, 1954 by Norton Baskin as Executor of the Last Will and Testament of Marjorie Kinnan Baskin (also known as Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings), deceased, to The University of Florida Endowment Corporation, filed October 4, 1954 and recorded in Deed Book 324, page 410 of the Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.

4. Alterations and additions: The building seems to be a composite of three separate units, probably added at different times. During her occupancy Mrs. Rawlings added bathrooms, a carport, and widened and screened the east porch.
- B. Historical Context: This building was occupied by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings while she wrote THE YEARLING, CROSS CREEK, CROSS CREEK COOKERY, SOUTH MOON UNDER. She makes several references to the house in CROSS CREEK, mentioning additions and repairs (Evolution of Comfort).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The structure is a typical late 19th century "cracker" farmhouse. It is a wood frame structure with wide porches and roof overhangs, appears to be a combination of three separate buildings (living, dining, and sleeping) connected with porches and breezeways. Each major room has cross ventilation and direct access to a porch.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 78'-0" x 95'-0", long dimension north-south.
2. Foundations: Miscellaneous concrete block (c. 1930) piers and wood posts. Air is allowed to circulate beneath the structure to forestall moisture and insect damage. Fragments of wood lattice panels remain.
3. Walls: Wood frame covered with board and batten, lapped horizontal siding. Structure painted white with green trim- baseboards, porch posts, and window and door trim.
4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Porches are located on the east, west and south sides of the house, a screened breezeway between the living and dining units. Wood porch floors slope from interior floor levels; they are unpainted.

Steps are of wood planks on simple wood stringers.

5. Chimneys: Chimneys are of salmon-pink clay brick and white mortar. Miscellaneous galvanized stacks for space heaters.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Unimportant. Screen doors open outwards, four-and five-panel wood doors; glazed. "French doors," two per opening between living room and east porch.
 - b. Windows: Double and single hung, 6/6, 1/1, miscellaneous sizes. All openings are screened.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: Gable, hip and shed roofs, wood shingled; galvanized ridge covers.
- b. Cornice and eaves: Boxed cornice and/or exposed rafters.

8. Plumbing: Water supply and sewage service exposed to the exterior.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: The structure consists of three separate units (living, dining and kitchen, and bedrooms) connected by porches, a breezeway, and a bathroom. Each major space is cross-ventilated.
- 2. Flooring: Wood strips and boards painted green, black and grey. Some areas are covered with modern composition tiles.
- 3. Wall and ceiling finish: Board and batten, horizontal car siding on both walls and ceiling. Some modern panel materials.
- 4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Miscellaneous wood panel doors.
 - b. Windows: Not documented. See window description under "Description of Exterior" section.
- 5. Decorative features and trim: Plain trim. Hexagonal iron bolts used decoratively in dining room fireplace. Firewood box on south porch decorated with turned corner posts.
- 6. Hardware: None of importance. Andirons in living room fireplace are constructed from ships' anchors.
- 7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Fireplaces and modern space heaters.
 - b. Lighting: Electric. Dining room fixture is a converted oil lamp.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: This structure is on a site between State Road 325 and the east shore of Orange Lake one mile from Cross Creek, which connects Orange with Lochloosa Lake. Nearby is a barn, pumphouse and the Will Mickens House which housed the hired hand family working for Mrs. Rawlings. Lime, orange, palm and oak trees surround the house.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views:

University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida. Rare Books Collection.

Norton Baskin, widower of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (also known as Marjorie Kinnan Baskin), Crescent Beach, Florida.

B. Interviews:

Gordon E. Bigelow, Professor, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

C. Bibliography:

1. Secondary and published sources:

Federal Writers Project. Florida. A Guide to the Southernmost State. New York: Oxford University Press, 1939.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Norton Baskin, widower of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Crescent Beach, Florida.

Chet Crosbey, Island Grove, Florida. He was grovekeeper for Mrs. Rawlings.

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